

# Interviewing Skills

Keys to success

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610-402-CARE LVHN.org

# Disclosures

- Neither Dr Donoghue nor Dr Flicker have any financial disclosures relevant to this presentation.

# Objectives

- Review literature relevant to interviewing as a tool to predict applicant success in resident education
- Explain why interviewing is critical to medical education program development
- Discuss structured models of interviewing that may lead to more success in selecting applicants

# Audience Poll

- What is your role in interviewing?
  - Medical students
  - Residents
  - Staff
  - other

# What are we looking for?



# Non-cognitive skills

- Interpersonal skills
- Communication skills
- Maturity
- Interest in the program or in the field



# What's EQ?

- Ability to identify and manage one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others.
- Four realms
  - Social awareness
  - Self-awareness
  - Relationship management
  - Self-management







# Challenges with Typical Interviews

- Poor validity and reliability
- Bias - conscious and unconscious
- “Halo effect” of other factors
- Applicants rehearsing, too prepared
- Unstructured interviews can leave applicants uninformed



But what about the applicant?



- Interact with program director
- Interact with residents
- Explore the area/facility





## Is it worth it?

- Applicants spend \$2,500 to \$10,000
  - Survey of plastic surgery residents
- Programs spend approximately \$9,900 to recruit one PGY1 resident
- **The business literature takes this seriously and invests in interviews**

# It is worth it - if it's done right!

- 89% of new hires FAILED because of skills that can be assessed in an interview
  - Poor interpersonal skills, alienate co-workers
  - Unable to accept feedback (beware those who cannot see their own weaknesses!)
  - Unable to manage emotions
  - Lack of drive

Leadership IQ Study: Why New Hires Fail, Murphy M., PR Newswire, 2005.

# Goals of Interviewing in Medical Education

## ■ Selection

- Good “fit” with your program
- Successful completion of your program
- Be someone that you would want to hire as faculty

## ■ Selling

- Attracting high quality applicants on your program
- Marketing your strengths

# Does the Interview Predict Resident Performance?

- 11 studies (614 participants)
  - Interview moderately predicts performance
- 17 studies (1723 participants)
  - Interview had no, weak or inverse correlation





# Does Interview Predict Attrition?

- 6 studies
  - Interview did not predict attrition- 4/6 studies
  - BEI subscore did- 1 study
  - Interview and USMLE score did- 1 study



# Does Interview Predict Professionalism Issues?

- 2 studies
  - Only negative comments in the Dean's Letter was associated with problem residents
  - Interview did not predict referral to an impaired physician program (35 year follow-up)





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"OK, wow me. Then impress me. Then dazzle me. Then maybe a little sadness. Then wow me again."

# GROUP EXERCISE

- What questions do you ask in your interviews?
- Is it unstructured and you see where conversation leads?
- Is it structured in that you ask each applicant the same questions?

# Some Interview Question Examples

- What has been your most valuable experience in medical school?
  - Applicant priorities and insight
- How would your friends describe you?
  - Self reflection and judgment
- Describe a time you had an ethical dilemma and what you did to handle it.
  - Conflict management and judgment

# Potential Areas of Focus

- Motivation
- Problem solving skills
- Commitment to your field
- Leadership skills
- Professionalism
- Communication skills
- Others

# Interview Types

- Unstructured
- Structured
  - Behavioral interviews
  - Multiple mini interviews
  - Competency based interviews
- Group/team interviews
- Others?



# Behavioral Event Interviews

- Describe a PAST experiences to exemplify characteristics that are sought for the program.
- “Tell me about a time when . . . .”
- Take notes and record actual responses

# Multiple Mini Interviews

- Series of short, structured interview stations used to assess non-cognitive qualities
  - Cultural sensitivity
  - Maturity
  - Teamwork
  - Empathy
  - Reliability
  - Communication skills
- Generally, the situational questions posed in an MMI touch on the following areas:
  - Ethical Decision Making;
  - Critical Thinking;
  - Communication Skills;
  - Current Healthcare and Societal Issues.
- MMI is not intended to test specific knowledge in the field.



# Competency Based Interviews

- Each interviewer focuses his/her questions on one competency
  - Communication and Interpersonal skills
  - Professionalism
  - Systems based practice
  - Practice based learning
- Patient care- Dean's letter comments, LOR
- Medical knowledge- USMLE/Comlex, clerkship grades





**"I really believe my research abilities would be an asset to whatever this company is called."**

# GROUP EXERCISE

- In groups, discuss your interview process.
  - How many interviews does the applicant have?
  - How long is each interview?
  - How many people are in each interview?
  - Who conducts your interviews?

# How Many Interviews?

- One interview does not allow applicants to see a variety of program members
- Too many interviews is not well accepted by applicants
- Average 2-4 – reliable and valid!

# Who Should Interview?

- Program Director?
  - Everyone wants to meet him/her
- Faculty
  - Might not know about some areas of the program
- Residents
  - Experience with interviewing?
- Program Coordinator
  - Not a physician

# Preparing Interviewers

- Request that they take notes
- Review questions that cannot be asked
  - Family planning, gender issues
  - Disabilities – no medical questions
- Review the goals of the interview and the scoring rubric
- Give them information about the program

# To See or Not To See

- Unblinded interviewers correlated their scores with the USMLE scores
- Options
  - Complete blinding
  - Partial blinding- no USMLE or grades but allow LORs and personal statements



# Scoring Interview

- Use anchors
  - Choose specific characteristic or competency that you seek in your applicant
  - List behaviors/responses that would correspond with the presence or absence of that trait
  - Let's try TEAMWORK
- Use standard scoring sheet/rubric



# Best Practices for Resident Interviewing

- Decide what your goals of interviewing are and craft the interview accordingly.
- Have set questions that are asked of all applicants. No unstructured interviews.
- Train interviewers in advance
  - Especially on illegal questions
- Use a scoring system with a written anchor
- Use multiple interviewers



# The Future

- Video interviews
  - Web-based conference interviews
  - Regional interview fairs
  - Others?
- 
- Need more evidence!
    - Studies to date have varied performance outcomes and limited power

# References

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# Questions?

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